Editorial

Nearly four centuries ago, Jan Amos Comenius described the school as a "workshop of humanity", a space in which members of the educational community come together and children develop in accordance with the ideals of humanism.

Modern society, together with ongoing efforts to improve and reform educational systems, continues to confirm the relevance of Comenius's vision. Despite the passage of centuries, the rigid conception of school as a place where teachers merely provide and transmit information to students has not disappeared. On the contrary, it continues to resurface in debates on educational reform.

Although society, technology, and educational systems have undergone profound transformations since the time of Comenius, the fundamental mission of schooling remains essentially unchanged. A school is not, and should never be, merely a place for the transmission of information. Rather, it is an environment for encounter, collaboration, personal development, and the cultivation of humanity in its broadest sense. Today's schools are conceived as safe environments in which, alongside the acquisition of knowledge and skills, students develop the literacies and competencies necessary for successful personal and professional lives. This process extends beyond the interaction between teacher and student and involves a wide range of educational actors, including teachers, special educators, social pedagogues, and other support professionals, who provide essential support to learners with diverse educational needs. It is therefore noteworthy that some of the measures designed to ensure such support have recently become the subject of public and policy debate.

Contemporary educational policy in the Czech Republic and across Europe largely reaffirms this principle. Curriculum reform, the emphasis on key competencies, student and teacher well-being, digital literacy, inclusion, and lifelong learning are all grounded in the conviction that education must respond to the complexity of the contemporary world and prepare individuals not only for employment but also for responsible personal and civic lives.

Nevertheless, seemingly simple solutions to the complex challenges facing contemporary education often revive conceptions of schooling that no longer correspond

either to the needs of modern society or to current findings in educational research. Living in an era in which information, as well as misinformation, is more accessible than ever before, the principal challenge is no longer primarily the transmission of information itself. Rather, it lies in understanding information, critically evaluating it, applying it in new contexts, and integrating it into meaningful frameworks of knowledge.

For this reason, contemporary schools should be developed as safe, supportive, and inclusive environments in which competencies necessary for life are cultivated alongside subject-specific knowledge. Such competencies are essential not only for today's rapidly changing world but, above all, for an uncertain future. The development of communication skills, critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, active citizenship, environmental responsibility, and collaborative abilities is no less important than mastery of disciplinary content. This trend is evident not only in European educational strategies but also in the ongoing reform of the Czech curriculum and in discussions concerning the future direction of education.

As schools evolve, so too do the roles of those who work within them. Education can no longer be understood as an isolated relationship between teacher and learner. The modern school functions as a complex educational community in which, alongside teachers, educators, school psychologists, special educators, social pedagogues, teaching assistants, and other professionals play an important role. Their work constitutes an indispensable component of support for children and students with diverse educational needs.

If we seek inspiration from other disciplines, we may observe that diversity contributes substantially to the stability and resilience of ecosystems. Similarly, interdisciplinary cooperation and shared responsibility for the educational success of every child are among the defining characteristics of the contemporary school.

It is equally noteworthy that recent public debates have included voices questioning the value of certain support measures and advocating their restriction. Such discussions deserve to be conducted on the basis of evidence and professional expertise. Educational systems should be responsive to the natural diversity of the child population and should strive to provide conditions that enable all learners to reach their full potential.

Alongside these issues, education is confronting new challenges associated with technological development, particularly the emergence of artificial intelligence. Its rapid advancement offers unprecedented opportunities for the personalisation of learning, the enhancement of educational assessment and diagnostic processes, and the professional development of teachers. At the same time, it places new demands on educational systems and reminds us that, alongside technological competencies, increasing importance will be attached to the capacities that make us human: ethical reasoning, creativity, empathy, communication, and the ability to establish meaningful interpersonal relationships.

Perhaps it is precisely here that we rediscover Comenius's legacy after centuries. While educational tools, curricular content, and social conditions continue to change, the essence of schooling remains unchanged: it is a safe environment in which human potential is nurtured, where children learn to understand both the world and themselves, and where they acquire the foundations for active, meaningful, and fulfilling lives.

Editors